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A PROGRAMME FOR PEACE

— BY —

HENRY WICKHAM STEED.



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A PROGRAMME FOR PEACE

— by —

HENRY WICKHAM STEED

of the "London Times"



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NOTE. It should be borne in mind that this article was written principally for British readers.

Henry Wickham Steed:

A PROGRAMME FOR PEACE.

ON the morning of Saturday, March 4, the thirteenth day of the battle of Verdun, I stood, with others on a low spur to the north-west of the town and heard, rather than watched, the preparation of the second German attack upon the village of Douaumont. A few hundred yards below us French batteries were snapping out defiance at the invisible German guns across the Meuse and beyond the nearest heights. How many guns of all calibres were in action on both sides I cannot tell — many hundreds certainly, perhaps thousands. Quick jets of flame would spurt from unexpected position, huge shells would drone across the valley and burst with terrific clatter into cloudlets of dirty, black-grey smoke, but even the stray gleams of anaemic sunshine that broke through the curtain of mist and sleet revealed little of the grim work in progress. It was like a severe spring tempest, with peal upon peal of rattling thunder, near and far, in a hilly landscape half hidden by sheets of snow and hail — but a tempest rendered tragic by the consciousness that, at every detonation, the devoted French infantry, some of the finest and most intelligent men in the world, were being dismembered, buried alive, or slain outright. Yet the uppermost feeling at the moment and on the spot was one of impatience at being merely a listening spectator, not a combatant. Only on returning westwards and seeing fresh reserves of sturdy humanity rushing towards the shambles in huge motor lorries, did reflection overcome the lingering thrill of the distant strife, and the question arise insistently, 'Why? Why?'

Little by little, the question transformed itself into a hard resolve, into a determination not consciously formed but elementary, like hunger or thirst, — 'Never again! Never again shall the fiends in human shape that let loose this orgy of wickedness upon the world be permitted to hold mankind to ransom, and to measure the liberties of their superiors in civilisation by the might of their own scientific savagery and organised lust of wealth and power!'

Hard upon the 'Why?' with its attendant resolve, followed the 'How?'; and before a clear notion as to ways and means could delineate itself in the mind came an angry wish that every minister and diplomatist, politician and publicist, whose voice may be heard or whose influence be felt in the determination of peace, should see what we had seen, hear what we had heard, feel what we had felt. A period of compulsory presence on or near a battlefield, of salutary exposure to shell-fire, of obligatory visit to ruined towns and villages, ought indeed to be an indispensable qualification for every man who aspires or may chance to be in a position to influence conditions of peace. How many suave soothsayers would find their words die on their lips how many political pontiffs would doubt their own infallibility, how many leisurely recliners in well-padded chairs would feel their sluggish blood tingle with an unwonted intensity of purpose, could they have direct experience of what war means, and realise the positive criminality of any failure to exact reparation to the uttermost from those who have caused it! The truth that only by prolonged punishment will it be possible to correct the impulses of those who sought to attain their ends by bringing woe upon others might then burn itself into flaccid minds and tighten lax moral sinews.

The war caught us unprepared. Shall peace, which some of our political wiseacres aver will come as a thief in the night, finds us also unprepared? Our unpreparedness, they say, was the best proof of the purity of our pacific intentions. It was also a proof of the sleepy gullibility of our statesmen. On that point much will presently have to be said, and the brows of those who, being watchmen, failed to watch,

or who, watching, saw and gave not alarm, will have to be suitably branded with the mark of guilt. Even now, after twenty months of war, they show little sign of being animated by the stern spirit, or of regarding the future with the penetrating vision that is indispensable if we and our Allies are to secure ourselves against a recurrence of the present catastrophe. We need to look and think ahead and to mobilise for peace. Whenever the conditions of peace become a question of immediate interest, and the suspension, or even the end, of hostilities is in sight, the blatant voice of crankdom will be heard again and every philanthropic or economic quack will cry his wares aloud in the market-place. Before this can happen it behoves every serious student of national and international affairs to make up his mind, while still under stress of war, as to the kind of Europe he would wish to see rebuilt upon the ruins of the Europe of 1914; and, having taken counsel of his fellows, to assist in formulating so sound a peace doctrine and in securing for it so large and solid a support of public opinion that no maudlin statesman or cynical diplomatist will dare to betray its fundamental postulates. In these matters the peoples of the British Empire cannot afford to 'trust the 'Government.' After having saved the Empire by their exertions, in conjunction with those of the Allies, they will need to save it again for the welfare of future generations by the soundness of their instinct and the vigour of their pacific purpose.

Let it not be said that peace conditions ought not to be conceived in a war-spirit. The peace we shall need to impose upon the enemy should be no ordinary peace. It cannot be a pact concluded, with honourable give and take, between two parties of belligerents who have learned to respect each other. It should be the kind of peace which a strong chief of frontier police dictates to marauding tribesmen. This war has been as an earthquake laying bare the foundations of European civilisation and revealing the national character of the shares in the fray. These characters are not likely to change within a calculable future. The nature of the German people, as we have learned to know

it during this war, is its real nature. As long as the Germans were weak and divided against themselves, their brutality and greed concerned chiefly themselves. But, with nation a unification and the direction of the national will by an ambitious dynasty they became a peril to mankind. It is against the revival of this peril in an active form that the Allied peoples must compel their Governments to guard. A strong peace policy, carefully thought out in the present war atmosphere and adhered to despite the fatigue that may accompany the last phases of the struggle, will be the best, nay, the only safeguard against a recurrence of the German danger.

The British Empire, which will have suffered less than any of the Allies during the struggle, is in duty bound to exert its whole power to make peace permanent. In its navy it wields a weapon that can ensure the adoption of whatever terms the Allies may formulate. It can decline to raise the blockade of Germany or to recognise the German flag on the high seas until Germany has made full reparation for the wrong she has done. The method of ensuring the adoption of the necessary peace terms is, however, a matter of less immediate importance than the discussion of what those terms shall be; and, in the drafting of those terms, the chief aim to be pursued in the creation of a Europe so constituted that German attempts to dominate it by force of arms or economically shall henceforth be hopeless.

It is often said that the Allies cannot hope permanently to subjugate or enfeeble a nation of 65,000,000 or, if the German Austrians be included, of 75,000,000 souls. From this premiss it is argued that no attempt should be made, after an Allied victory, to interfere with the internal arrangements of the German Empire or to pursue a 'vindictive' policy. Smug humanitarians who have neither fired a shot nor seen a shot fired in the war will remind us of the advantages secured to Germany by Bismarck's 'magnanimous' treatment of Austria in 1866, and will warn us that we cannot impoverish Germany without limiting her future power to trade with us, and, consequently, without impoverishing ourselves. Before the war ends, it may be hoped that a sense of the enormity

of the crime committed by Germany in provoking it will have become keen enough in England, as it already is in the British Dominions, to rob this pernicious nonsense of its befuddling power. But, inasmuch as the good-natured foolishness of Englishmen is inexhaustible, it is necessary at once to demolish the mistaken or interested conception upon which these arguments are based.

There is no parallel between the situation of 1866 and that of the Allies in this war. Bismarck's 'generous' treatment of Austria was intended to facilitate German aggression upon France and to remove a potential obstacle to Prussian hegemony in Europe. It was meant to spare the pride and the material interests of the Hapsburgs and their peoples against the day when they could be cajoled or coerced into alliance with Germany. It was conceived as a first step towards the practical annexation of Austria-Hungary by Germany: that is to say, as a preliminary to the policy of 'peaceful penetration' which Germany has since developed with such treacherous virtuosity in other countries besides Austria. Far better would it have been for Austria and for Europe had Bismarck failed to prevent his Sovereign from inflicting upon the Hapsburgs a galling wound. They would then have been compelled to set their house in order and seriously to seek reliable Allies against the Prussian victors. As it was, Bismarck's 'magnanimity' presently enabled Germany to acquire working control of Austria-Hungary and to use her 50,000,000 inhabitants as retainers of the Hohenzollerns. The advantages which Germany has derived from having at her disposal this mass of **Menschenmaterial** to serve as cannon fodder are immense — scarcely less important than the services rendered her by the Škoda, Wittkowitz, and other Rothschild arsenals in Austria. The advantages which Austria has derived from her association with Germany are, on the contrary, bankruptcy, famine, loss of independence, and, if the Allies do their duty, permanent disruption.

Against Bismarck's magnanimity in 1866 should be set off his treatment of Denmark in 1864 and of France in 1871.

How keen was his regret in later years that, through a miscalculation, he had then failed to 'bleed France white!' The present war was intended by Germany to do what the Treaty of Frankfurt had failed to accomplish; and if, by any chance, Germany had been able to land a force in England, our partisans of 'magnanimity' would have been taught a lesson that might have disturbed even their incorrigible faith in German highmindedness.

The task of the Allies is not to seek, in misunderstood history, precedents for the solution of an entirely unprecedented problem, but to deal with the problem itself on its merits.

It is true that an entire people cannot be punished for murderous brigandage as an individual would be punished; but it can be taught, as individuals have to be taught, that brigandage and murder do not pay. This lesson has to be inculcated directly upon the present generation of Germans, and in such manner that its chastening effect may be felt by future generations. After the war the Allies cannot simply resume their former relations with Germany. They must for a long time to come have few dealings with her other than those that may be necessary to secure full reparation to Belgium, Northern France, Serbia and Poland. Some metaphysicians, posing as economists, have enunciated the doctrine that we cannot impoverish Germany without impoverishing ourselves. If that be true, the answer must be: Let us rather be impoverished and secure than see Germany go unpunished and her victims denied indemnity. But it has yet to be proved that by economic alliance between the various portions of the British Empire and between it and our Allies, by developing our and their resources, we shall not only not be impoverished but shall gain in clean prosperity. Germany, it may be said, will trade with neutrals; and as we cannot help trading with neutrals, we shall be indirectly trading with Germany. This question of relations with neutrals will require firm and careful treatment. France, for instance, who is setting an example in so many things, is already dealing with it. The French commercial

service, which is ably organised, is already 'blacklisting' neutral firms which are known to have placed themselves at the disposal of Germany during the war. Those firms will do no more business with French firms for many a long day. Should not our commercial service, which has accumulated much valuable information on the subject of the assistance given to the enemy by neutral trades, also begin to prepare its 'black list' for future use?

In trade, as in all other matters, there should be preferential treatment between the Allies after the war. Neutrals will fall into several classes. Countries which, like the United States, have shown, on the whole, good will towards the Allied cause and have understood its significance for the future of humanity; governments which, like that of Spain, have 'played the game' to the best of their power; and possibly little States like Denmark, that have cowered defenceless under the fist of the German bully, will be entitled to special consideration. But States which have clandestinely sided with and helped the enemy or have deliberately hampered the Allies during the war; peoples which, while able to defend themselves against eventual German aggression, have yet believed in and wished for the success of German arms, must be regarded as second-class neutrals. The economic and financial arrangements and practices that ceased at the beginning of August 1914 can never return. The old order of things in Europe passed away for ever when the Germans crossed the Belgian frontier. The leaders of the Allied peoples should therefore cease to stumble backwards into the future with their eyes wistfully fixed on the past and their minds filled with longing to save as much as possible of its effete arrangements. They should resolutely face the new conditions, actual and prospective, in which the wealth of individuals and of the nation, their trade and their industries, will be as truly parts of the national defensive system as are armies and navies.

In other words, a war temper must animate our statesmen, politicians, and public. Hitherto many of our public

men have displayed only a regretful peace temper. They have acted and spoken as though they expected — some of them indeed have never ceased to expect—peace to 'break out' at any moment. Their chief preoccupation has been how, on the 'outbreak' of peace, to return to *ante bellum* conditions with the least loss of time and of money, and will the least dislocation of their views and habits. Have we not heard Sir Edward Grey bewail, again and again, the wickedness of Germany — because she refused to attend a diplomatic conference upon the Sarajevo assassination? He seems really to have believed that Germany, after having carefully prepared for many years the wherewithal for the assassination of Europe, and having secured a most advantageous pretext for the consummation of her premeditated crime, would meekly take part in a diplomatic conference during which her prospective victims might have had time to divine her purpose. He appears still not to perceive that the Conference of Ambassadors of 1912-1913, over which Germany and Austria allowed him to preside, was designed by Germany to gain time for the completion of her naval, military, and diplomatic preparations, while convincing him of her good faith and thus increasing the likelihood of British neutrality during her onslaught. Men of this temper cannot be trusted to reconstruct Europe in the way in which Europe must be reconstructed if this war is to be final, and not merely a prelude to other wars fought in less advantageous conditions. Unless the British Empire is to betray its trust to its peoples and to its Allies, our Foreign Minister, not less than our Prime Minister and our Generals, need to be men filled with the war temper.

Hitherto only one of our present Ministers has shown, from time to time though not constantly, sign of the true war temper. It has been reserved for the Prime Minister of Australia, Mr. Hughes, to display it in its fulness. The response evoked by the speeches in which, in the terms applied by him to Mr. Lloyd George, he 'used words as an in-

strument to action, 'not as a substitute for it,' showed how wrong is the inarticulate war temper among our people. The appearance of Mr. Hughes and the reception given to his speeches have been the most heartening phenomena in the non-military public life of the British Empire since the beginning of the war. We can be grateful to him without needing to acclaim him as 'the man', or to believe that upon his frail shoulders we can unload the burden of our duty while we slumber yet awhile. No one man can save the Empire or the Allied Cause. This war is essentially a war of peoples, not of kings or dictators. But no people can act efficiently without some crystallisation of its ideas, some canalisation of its political instincts. Those who have given thought to the matter should therefore put forward their conception of the practical objects to be attained by the war, if only in the hope of provoking a discussion that may help to clear up obscure points and to further the acceptance of a general programme. In this hope I venture tentatively to draw up a list of what seem to me the essential postulates of a lasting peace.

(1) That the Allies win the war so thoroughly as to be able to dictate their terms. An inconclusive peace, following upon even a victorious war, would be but a prelude to a fresh period of armaments and of preparation for a struggle still more cruel.

(2) That, as a preliminary step to the winning of the war, the British people entrust its management to a few men filled with the war spirit and determined to conquer literally at all costs.

(3) That the co-ordination of Allied effort, and particularly of Franco-British effort, be carried much farther than it has hitherto been. To this end the British forces in France should be regarded as an integral part of the French Army, and should receive orders, not merely suggestions or advice, from the French Commander-in-Chief and his Chief of Staff. Just as the French Navy is, in practice, subordinate to the

British Navy, so the British Army, with its reserves and resources, should be effectively subordinate to the French Army, which, in the conduct of a Continental war, is at least as superior to our Army as the British Navy is superior to the French Navy.

(4) That as soon as a Government for War shall have been formed in Great Britain, a policy of economic alliance between the various parts of the Empire, with the help of statesmen from Oversea Dominion, shall be drafted on broad lines.

(5) That this policy having been formulated and adopted in principle, the British Empire, as a whole, shall concert with its Allies a scheme for economic defence against Germany and her allies both during and after the war. The objects of this scheme would be: — (a) To tighten the 'blockade' of Germany; (b) to convince Germany and her allies that the longer they continue the struggle the more complete will be their economic ruin, and the more protracted the period of economic servitude through which they must pass until they have fully indemnified those of the Allies who have most suffered from Germany's action; (c) to establish, as a settled principle of Allied policy, that, until these indemnities have been fully paid, the British and Allied Navies will not recognise the German or any enemy flag upon the high seas; and that the Allies will exact such additional guarantees of the payment of these indemnities, by occupation of territory or otherwise, as may be deemed essential.

(6) That, simultaneously with the formulation of an Allied economic policy, there shall be taken in hand the establishment of a definite scheme of European reconstruction, territorial and political, such a scheme to include: —

(a) The restoration of Alsace-Lorraine to France;

(b) The adjustment of Belgian territory in accordance with Belgian requirements;

(c) The constitution of an ethnically complete Serbia in the form of a United States of Yugoslavia;

(d) The constitution of a unified self-governing Poland under the Russian sceptre;

(e) The constitution of an independent, or at least autonomous, Bohemia, including Moravia and the Slovak country of north-western Hungary;

(f) The allotment to Rumania of the Rumanian regions of Hungary and the Bukovina, provided that Rumania shall have helped effectively to liberate those regions from Austro-Hungarian rule;

(g) The establishment of the freedom of the Bosphorus and of the Dardanelles to shipping, after Russia has secured, or has been given, possession of Constantinople.

(h) The completion of Italian unity by the inclusion within the frontiers of the kingdom of Italy of all Italian districts in the Trentino and the Carnic Alps, on the Triestine littoral and the Istrian coast; the establishment of Italian naval control in the Adriatic by the possession of Pola, Lissa, and Valona.

I foresee the objections that, though the pastime of selling the bear's skin may be diverting, no practical object can be served by discussing conditions of peace before the enemy has been beaten, and that the concentration of attention upon 'after the war' problems may distract the public mind from the much more serious business of winning the war. The force of these arguments is undeniable, but there are considerations which make it eminently expedient that a sound scheme of general peace conditions should be framed before hostilities end. The war may still last many months, perhaps years. The longer it lasts the more exhausted will all the belligerents become, and the more eager will be sections of public opinion in the Allied countries to secure a rapid settlement without overmuch haggling as to terms. Fatigue, masquerading as generosity, and unavowed pro-Germanism whispering 'Let bygones be bygones,' might become serious political factors unless the Allied peoples were agreed in advance upon a minimum peace programme. We do not know in what form proposals for peace will be made. The first proposal may be for an armistice, during which conditions would be debated. Such an armistice would oblige the Allies to keep their millions of men mobilised, ready to

resume hostilities should negotiations break down. The longer the armistice and the more protracted negotiations, the more irksome would be the state of armed inactivity to the men in the field, and the keener the desire for a rapid settlement that would restore them to their civil occupations and relieve the burden upon taxpayers. In these circumstances the tendency to compromise upon essential points might become too strong for any Allied government to withstand. Germany, we may be sure, will seek to exploit these possibilities. It behoves us, therefore, to guard against them in advance.

The best means of guarding against them is the formulation of a clear-cut minimum programme which must be accepted by the enemy before any armistice can be conceded. The programme must include the giving of guarantees for its execution pending negotiation upon points of detail. These guarantees must be such as to permit of the demobilisation of the greater part of the Allied armies, even if the fleets have to remain mobilised. The protraction of discussion upon points of detail for a few weeks or months would then matter little.

Another and equally cogent reason for the formulations of a minimum peace programme in advance lies in the manœuvres which Germany has already attempted, and is likely increasingly to attempt when she is forced to admit herself beaten. She may, for instance, suddenly evacuate Belgium in the hope of troubling Allied public opinion and of inducing neutrals to clamour for the cessation of hostilities. Belgium once evacuated, she would doubtless try to use her occupation of north-eastern France and Poland and the Austro-German occupation of Serbia as a lever to extort concessions from the Allies. If these manœuvres were thwarted, there would remain a supreme expedient to which—as careful observers of German affairs have long apprehended—the German Government may have recourse. Allied statesmen have repeatedly declared that 'we are resolved to destroy Prussian militarism.' Some have added that we are not fighting 'the German people'; and others have

fatuously disclaimed any wish to 'humiliate' Germany. It is conceivable that when German bankers, shippers, manufacturers and merchants see ruin staring them in the face, they may — not without a secret understanding with the Government — organise a bogus revolution for the benefit of Allied public opinion and seek the moral rehabilitation reserved for repentant prodigal children. This would be perhaps the most effective and, for the Allied cause, the most dangerous manœuvre that the Germans could attempt. The organisation for effecting it lies ready to hand. The Social Democratic party, the working-class organisation, the press and other agencies, are well under control, and are, to a great extent, subject to Jewish influence. Were the Prussian Government, or even the Hohenzollern dynasty, convinced that a well-managed revolution would be the shortest path to comparative safety, they would scarcely hesitate to sanction it — with the understanding that, when once generous peace terms had been conceded by the Allies to a penitent German people and the Allied armies had been demobilised, an equally well-managed counter-revolution would set things right again.

Against this possibility also the Allies need to be on their guard. It is not impossible, though, in present conditions, it is scarcely probable, that the German people, exasperated by its losses, will attempt a real and serious revolt; though it is hard to see what chance of success such a revolt could have as long as the able-bodied male population remains under arms in the field. But, in any case, it would be easy to distinguish a true from a false revolution. When we receive authentic information that the German masses are burning, murdering, and pillaging in their own cities with the same natural and innate ferocity as the German soldiers displayed in Belgium and France, we may begin cautiously to inquire whether something has not changed in Germany, and, after having convinced ourselves of the reality of the change, to take the new situation into account. The whole question of the attitude of the Allies towards Germany in future years, as, indeed, the question of the internal constitution of Ger-

many herself, must depend very largely upon the conduct of the German people during the later phases of the war. We shall need very carefully to avoid the danger of mistaking our wish that there may be a change of heart in Germany for the reality of such a change.

There is yet another and final argument in favour of the formulation of a minimum peace programme by the Allies before peace negotiations begin. The reconstruction of Europe will be a hard task. Were the work to be left entirely to a diplomatic congress sitting in secret after the strain of war has passed away, the Allied peoples, to whose determination and self-sacrifice victory have been due, might find themselves confronted with a series of accomplished facts hardly differing in quality from the grotesque abominations perpetrated by the Congress of Vienna. As a general rule, professional diplomatists have no political conscience. Their whole training tends to exorcise it from them. Frequently, too, they are skilled ignoramuses. Foreign Ministers of parliamentary origin are often as ignorant as diplomatists, though less skilled. They are apt to be puppets whose gestures are controlled by wires pulled by permanent officials. No lasting or satisfactory European settlement can be attained by such agents unless the general character of the work is marked out from them beforehand by the informed moral sense of their respective peoples. It is necessary, therefore, that the broad conditions of a European settlement should be discussed and agreed upon in advance by groups of competent persons in the Allied countries. It should be the task of these groups to explain to the public the bearings of the various questions awaiting solution, and to create a sound public opinion which may compel governments to 'run straight.' However disheartening it may be that democratic governments should in this war have proved, on the whole, so inferior to their task of leadership and so incapable of rising above personal or party conceptions; however round-about, slow, and uneconomical may be the method of driving a government, by pressure of public opinion, to do the duty it ought to have done spontaneously, there is at least this

compensation, that in future we shall not be saddled with pseudo-dictators who might prove as incompetent for the tasks of peace as are our lawyers and other political hacks for the tasks of war.

A democracy has to work out its own salvation, and cannot abdicate its governing functions without grave peril to itself. But it needs to watch the doings of its agents much more vigilantly than it has done hitherto and to make them feel that they are exercising executive power with halters round their necks. Groups of competent persons are now being formed in the principal Allied countries; these groups will endeavour to keep in close touch with each other, so that their influence upon the public opinion and, through public opinion, their pressure upon the governments of their respective countries, may be concordant and simultaneous. Some of the questions with which they must deal will naturally be national rather than international or inter-Ally. British, Russian, and Italian opinion would have little to do with the restoration of Alsace-Lorraine to France, save in supporting the demands which the French nation might, upon mature reflection, formulate as indispensable. Similarly, the opinion of Allied countries would have little to say to any internal rearrangement of the British Empire, save in so far as it might affect their economic interests. Upon the demands of Belgium, whenever they are definitely formulated, the European Allies in general will have to pronounce, though it may be confidently expected that they will uphold every proposal that may tend to strengthen the political and economic position of Belgium in Europe and Africa. It is upon questions in regard to which there is no precedent for the guidance of public opinion — such as the Southern Slav, the Bohemian, and, to some extent, the Polish questions — that the work of agreement will be hardest. So many unfamiliar factors will be involved, so many conflicting interests will come into play, that only by seeking solutions on firm and clear principles will it be possible to reach a tolerable settlement in time. Each of these questions — the Southern Slav, the Bohemian, the Polish, and also the Rumanian—

affects the existence of Austria-Hungary. Indirectly also they bear upon the future political constitution of the German people. Old follies die hard, and there lurk in many quarters in this country and in France, if not, indeed, in Italy, mouldy convictions that Austria is indispensable to the Balance of Power in Europe, and that 'if she did not exist it would 'be necessary to invent her.' Ideas such as this take no account of the fact that the Hapsburg Monarchy has been since 1866 potentially, and since 1879 actually, an appendage of Germany, and that her 'mosaic of peoples,' which superficial observers expected to break up at the first shock, has been and still is in reality an element of strength to the German Empire. As long as these peoples are controlled by the Hapsburg Crown and are clamped together, as in an iron frame, by the power of the army, the bureaucracy, the police, the Church, and the Jews, so long will they be instruments of Berlin and involuntary foes of the peace of Europe. The Hapsburg Monarchy must be broken into and broken up from outside by detaching from it those elements which, ethnically, 'belong elsewhere.' The fate of the remainder will depend largely upon the policy which the Allies may think expedient to adopt in regard to Germany.

First among the fragments requiring detachment are the Southern Slav provinces—and here we reach an issue which, in its apparent simplicity and real complexity, is characteristic of many of the issues which the reconstruction of Europe will raise. Serbia has deserved so well of the Allies as to be entitled to any and every extension of territory to which she can legitimately lay claim. But Serbia has been in the past an exclusively Balkan and Orthodox State, over whose policy outside agencies have sometimes acquired undue influence. Should the Allied Governments think it sufficient to reinstate her in the territory she held before her overthrow last autumn, and merely to grant her sundry 'compensations,' they would probably render the Southern Slav question insoluble and seriously impede any satisfactory reconstruction of Europe. The creation of an ethnically complete Serbo-Croatia, or rather Yugoslav^{ia}, is an indispensable preliminary to any proper

treatment of the Austrian question, upon a sound solution of which the future equilibrium of Europe depends.

It would not be too much to say that, without the creation of a unified Yugoslavia, there can be no lasting tranquillity in Europe. Should any shortsighted attempt be made, or, if made, be persisted in, to keep the Croat or Catholic portions of the Southern Slav world separate from the Orthodox or Serb portions; should any mistaken solicitude for the maritime outlets of Austria or Hungary be allowed to impede the union of the Croats, Slovenes and Serbs of Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Slovene country and parts of Istria, with the Serbs of Serbia proper, the door would be left open to endless friction and intrigue from which there would probably be no escape save through another war. The United States of Southern (or Yugo) Slavia would include some 5,000,000 Catholic, some 7,000,000 adherents of the Orthodox Church, and a few hundred thousand Serb Musulmans. The complete fusion of these various elements — which, be it noted, are all of one race and spoken language — might be as long a process as has been the fusion of the various States of Italy into one united Italian people; but, given political union and the cohesive force of a common patriotism under the pressure of common peril, the fusion would be but a question of time. With a strong Southern Slav State of 12,000,000 inhabitants, stretching from the Upper Save to the Vardar and from the Danube to the Adriatic, Europe would know that the Gate to the East would be securely held. Such a State could not menace Italian naval supremacy in the Adriatic nor impede the development of Italian commercial and linguistic influence in the Balkan. On the contrary, it would offer a wide field to Italian economic enterprise and give to Italian influence an opening such as it has not had since the fall of the Venetian Republic. With Trieste as a free port in Italian possession and under Italian administration, and with Fiume as a free port under Southern Slav administration, ample provision would be made for the needs of Hungarian and Austrian seaborne commerce. Between Fiume and San Giovanni di

Medua there would be harbours in plenty for the maritime trade of Yugoslavia.

The achievement of Southern Slav unity, coupled with the completion of Rumanian unity by the inclusion in the kingdom of Rumania of the Rumanic district of Hungary and the Bukovina, would tend to reduce the kingdom of Hungary to its proper proportions and to leave the Magyars in possession of the central Hungarian plain. The process would require to be completed by the inclusion of the 2,000,000 Slovaks of north-western Hungary in a united Bohemian-Moravian-Slovak State that would stretch from the Saxon border to the Danube at Pressburg. Such a Bohemia would comprise some 12,000,000 souls, inhabiting a country in an advanced stage of industrial development and possessing great mineral wealth. The large Bohemian port of Ústí (or Aussig) on the Elbe, of which the commercial importance rivals that of Trieste, and the development of Pressburg as a Danube port, would provide outlets for Bohemian trade; while proper international arrangements as to railway communications would give railway access to Trieste and Fiume, if not, indeed, to northern ports. Like Yugoslavia, Bohemia would be vitally interested in resisting the encroachments of Germanism. The removal of these States from the orbit of Germanic control would weaken the aggressive force of the German people, and would tend to keep its political and military ambitions within bounds.

This consideration applies with almost equal force to the reunion of Poland. The removal of Galicia from Austria, and of the Duchy of Posen and of Silesia from Germany, would deprive the Germans of ill-gotten sources of strength and wealth. The reconstruction of Poland will be no easy matter. A nation cannot be divided for nearly a century and a half and placed under three different systems of government and education without the separate fragments becoming in some measure differentiated. There are noticeable differences to-day between the Poles of Austria, the Poles of Russia, and the Poles of Prussia, however much these differences may be overshadowed by the intense Polish

patriotism that animates them all. Under a unitary régime these differences would tend to disappear. But, as moderation has not hitherto been regarded as the distinctive feature of the Polish national character, it is indispensable, both in the interest of the Poles themselves and in the interest of Europe, that a renewed Polish polity should not be left to fend entirely for itself. Poland should be attached to Russia in such manner that the welfare and integrity of the Polish nation cannot become a matter of indifference to the Russian Empire. Poland, however reconstituted—and on this point Polish views differ too widely to permit of any dogmatic scheme of settlement in detail—will need at once the protecting hand of Russia and access to the Russian market. Without the Russian market, Polish industry, when it has recovered from the havoc of the war, would be likely to languish, despite the new openings which would be provided by the reversion to Poland, in one form or another, of the Polish ports of Dantzic and Königsberg. Divorced from Russia, Poland would, moreover, fall into the position of a mere buffer State, a borderland between Russia and Germany, in whose affairs Petrograd and Berlin would be constantly tempted to interfere, with results deplorable alike to Europe, to Russia, and Poland. Reunion and self-government under the Russian sceptre should therefore be the watchwords of the Allies and of far-sighted Polish leaders. The pledge given to Poland in the Grand Duke's manifesto of August 1914, a pledge which the Emperor of Russia has repeatedly ratified, is the basis upon which the solution of the Polish question must be sought.

Upon the necessity of completing Italian national unity, and of securing for Italy a position in the Mediterranean and in the Adriatic corresponding to her needs and to her just aspirations, little need be said. For Italy this war is less a war of conquest and territorial acquisition than a war of national safety, both material and moral. It has enabled her, after a period of diplomatic servitude, to take her place once more by the side of the free nations of the West; and it has afforded her an opportunity to escape from the German

control of her intellectual and economic life. But the Allies of Italy should not forget that she cannot suddenly change her commercial allegiance without serious detriment to her national economy unless they begin, during the war, to substitute their own economic aid and influence for that of Germany. The people of Italy are very devoted to the ideals for which the Allies are fighting. No factors influenced more potently their decision to draw the sword than their indignation at the German treatment of Belgium and their horror at the sinking of the 'Lusitania.' They believe also in the principle of nationality to which they owe their existence, and which they, like the other Allies, are pledged to uphold. But they look for a helping hand during and after the war, and expect the Allies to sustain them, in trade as in arms, while the struggle against militant Germanism endures.

Our duty to Russia is equally plain. It is to aid Russia in securing the possession of Constantinople and to place the economic freedom of the Straits upon unassailable foundations, to further the development of Russian resources, and to establish between the Russian people and ourselves a communion of feeling and interests that shall withstand all efforts to undermine it. In our attitude towards Russia, as towards our other Allies, any hint of egoism, any display of calculating selfishness, would be fatal. The war which Germany sprang upon the world in August 1914 was essentially a war for the destruction of the liberties of Europe. It is a war of common defence against Germany that is being fought by all the Allied Powers. Without complete self-forgetfulness, we none of us can hope either to win the war satisfactorily or to impose upon the enemy conditions that will guarantee a lasting peace.

Indeed, something more than any conditions which the Allies may be able to impose upon the enemy will be needed if peace is to be really permanent. Its foundations are being laid from day to day during the war by the conduct of the Allies towards each other. If, when hostilities cease, the stock of good will between the Allies and for their respect for each other should through any mismanagement prove to have been lessened during the course of the struggle, their

reciprocal engagements will have lost virtue and the settlement of delicate questions will become extremely difficult. If, on the contrary, the rough-and-ready give-and-take that accompanies the working of every true alliance has resulted in an increase of good will and of eagerness to give each other the benefit of any doubt that may arise, it will be possible to find, in a large and trustful spirit, tolerable solutions for many an 'insoluble' problem. Hence the importance of inter-Ally propaganda, in order to make Great Britain better understood among the masses of the people in France, Russia, Italy, Japan, and reciprocally to generate in the minds of the masses of our own people feelings of effective sympathy for our Allies generally and for each Ally severally. Those who do such work are true apostles of peace, for, by striving to create and maintain instinctive cohesion among the Allies, they are not only thwarting in advance the efforts of the enemy to separate us one from another during the war, but are cementing relationships which, by enduring after the war, will convince the sound elements among the German people that only by a complete change of method and aspiration can Germany hope to regain admission to the family of civilised nations.

I have deliberately refrained from touching upon the difficult extra-European issue with which the Allies will have to deal either before or immediately after the conclusion of peace. Such questions are those of Persia, Armenia, Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine, not to mention the whole problem of the repartition of the German possessions in Africa and elsewhere. Each and all of these questions might give rise to serious friction unless they were approached in the spirit of reciprocal confidence that makes it possible to speak frankly without giving offence or arousing suspicion of ulterior motives. Whether Persia be maintained as a quasi-independent State or placed directly under Anglo-Russian tutelage; whether Turkish Armenia come under Russian protection or be given an autonomy guaranteed by the Allied Great Powers; whether Mesopotamia become a British and Syria a French possession, or whether some other form of administration be found, the value of the settlements adopted

will depend almost entirely upon the spirit in which they are conceived and upon the relations which will thereafter exist between the Allies. Should peace, even a victorious peace, leave any feeling that one or other of the Allied Powers had sought its own profit, or had, while professing to exert its utmost strength, cannily let the main burden rest on the shoulders of others, then that Power will have suffered moral defeat, and, in any future contest, will have to fight its battles alone. Our business is to take care that no such suspicion should rest upon ourselves. This is why so much importance attaches to questions like the rise of freights, and the consequent prohibitive prices of coal and other necessities which we help to supply to our Allies. The fact that, mainly through lack of timely and concerted official action, British shipowners have been allowed to make gigantic profits out of the needs and sufferings of others naturally creates comment among our Allies, whose irritation is not assuaged by the reflection that, owing largely to the same lack of timely action, the shipowners belonging to neutral and to Allied countries have also been able to take advantage of the prevailing high freights. Again, any suspicion that we are wilfully backward in recruiting and training our armies, or niggardly in pouring them into the common stock, would naturally diminish the good will of our friends in France, Russia, and Italy. There is indisputable evidence of the effect produced in Russia by the manoeuvres of German agents who disseminated the saying 'England will fight to the last drop — of Russian blood.' We cannot seek out and refute these calumnies one by one, but we can and happily are now striving to promote a better understanding of our position and purpose in the minds of our Allies. Yet, when all has been done, it remains true that the first requisite of our present position is to demonstrate by our every word and act our loyalty to our Allies and our determination to carry on the war until our enemy is crushed. This is the first postulate of a peace programme, for, without it, the signing of a peace treaty will bring us, not the assured prospect of fruitful tranquillity, but the certainty of future trouble.

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